

ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH CONGRESS  
**Congress of the United States**  
**House of Representatives**  
COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE  
2125 RAYBURN HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-6115

Majority (202) 225-2927  
Minority (202) 225-3641

**Statement of Rep. Henry A. Waxman**  
**Ranking Member, Committee on Energy and Commerce**  
**Hearing on “H.R. 2012, a bill to improve the integrity and safety of interstate horseracing,**  
**and for other purposes”**  
**Subcommittee on Commerce, Manufacturing, and Trade**  
**November 21, 2013**

Today the Subcommittee examines H.R. 2012, a bill aiming to bring needed reform to horse racing in the United States.

Concerns have been raised for decades about the use of drugs in horse racing. These concerns stem from both safety and sports integrity standpoints. Recent examinations have shed light on many practices taking place at America’s racetracks and stables, including the prevalent use of both legal and illegal drugs.

For example, a 2012 investigation by *The New York Times* revealed that an average of 24 horses per week suffer fatal injuries at U.S. tracks – many more, per capita, than in other nations. While several factors play a role in this disparity, we must acknowledge that U.S. horse trainers have been caught administering illegal drugs 3,800 times since 2009. And the true number of violations is far higher, because not all horses are being tested. Cocaine, cobra venom, and, most recently, dermorphin – a potent painkiller drawn from South American tree frogs – are among the illegal substances found to have been used by U.S. trainers, some of whom have racked up drug violations across several states.

Legal drugs also contribute to fatal injuries. Popular anti-inflammatory medications pose a considerable threat to horses, as these drugs can mask the pain associated with serious musculoskeletal disorders. As we have seen repeatedly, when a horse falls, all competitors – both horses and humans are at risk.

Several states have taken it upon themselves to institute race-day drug bans. In addition, eight states have begun to work across state lines to promote common medication and testing standards, with another 10 states considering joining those efforts.

Unfortunately, these steps are not sufficient to fully address the problem. Horseracing is only as strong as its weakest link, and with 38 separate state commissions, the sport has little power to prevent violators in one state from repeating their behavior in another. I am also

concerned that we have the same individuals promoting and policing horse racing at the same time.

The bill we are considering today would charge the U.S. Anti-Doping Agency, or USADA, with developing and enforcing uniform standards for races with interstate, off-track wagers. H.R. 2012 would ban the use of all medication 24 hours prior to a race, give USADA the authority to decide what drugs are permitted and prohibited, and establish strict penalties for violations of the rules.

USADA is a highly capable, independent organization known for facilitating a transparent, democratic standard-setting process. And through its work in Olympic sports, cycling, and other venues, it has proven itself a tough and fair enforcer of anti-doping rules.

Having an independent commission with a national scope and a mandate to develop and enforce rules seems like a sensible approach, and I look forward to today's hearing to understand better how it could work.

Ultimately, meaningful reform in horse racing comes down to a concerted decision to uphold the fairness of competition and the safety of all involved. I hope this hearing moves us in the right direction.

Thank you.